

Tumwater Education Association

ADVOCATE

TumwaterEA.org

March 2026



President's Corner

Proposed TSD Board of Directors Policy 5254 limits our Union organizing and first amendment free speech protections. The policy does this by giving the Board of Directors and the Superintendent the power to arbitrarily discipline employees, leading up to termination of employment, for taking part in Union activity and exercising our rights to free speech under the first amendment.

Here is the exact language from proposed draft Policy 5254 which opens the door for arbitrary discipline of employees, leading up to termination of employment:

"The First Amendment protects a public employee's speech when the employee is speaking as an individual citizen on a matter of public concern. Even so, employee expression that has an adverse impact on district operations and/or negatively impacts an employee's ability to perform their job for the district may still result in disciplinary action up to and including termination."

Who decides which employee expression has an "adverse impact on district operations?" Who decides which employee expression "negatively impacts an employee's ability to perform their job?" What are the standards by which these decisions are made for disciplining and terminating employees?



Education Support Professionals WEA Scholarship Opportunity

"The Washington Education Association is offering six scholarships of \$1,500 each to Education Support Professionals who are pursuing professional advancement through trades, technical or collegiate institutions. All current ESP members of a WEA local affiliate or bargaining unit are eligible to apply for a Warren G. Magnuson Educational Support Professional (ESP) Scholarship. Three of the six grants are designated for an ESP member of color.

Eligibility

All current ESP members of a WEA local affiliate or bargaining unit who:

1. Are currently an active member,
2. Have not previously received the Magnuson scholarship, and
3. Are pursuing course work related to obtaining a skills certificate or degree.

Application Packet

Completed online applications must be received no later than 4 p.m. Friday, May 1.

The application packet must include the following items:

1. Plan for obtaining additional certificate(s) or degree(s),
2. Description of how your professional growth will help you contribute to public schools and student success, and
3. Two reference letters. These can be from any union member, colleague, student, parent or community connection."

WEA ESP Scholarship Application

Please share this information with the Education Support Professionals at your Tumwater School District building (site). ESPs are the office professionals and paraeducators we work with every day.

SOURCE: WEA



**The Washington Education Association's
Caucus of Native American,
Alaskan Native &
First Nations Educators**

Oustanding Native Educator Nomintions Due April 17

“The Washington Education Association’s Caucus of Native American, Alaskan Native and First Nations Educators (WEA: NA.AN.FN) is proud to announce that the Caucus will officially be recognizing two deserving Native Educators of the Year again this year!

Eligibility

1. The candidate must be of Native American, Alaskan Native or First Nations (Canadian Native) descent. (Indigenous South and Central American, and Caribbean Natives, and Pacific Islanders who hold a primary affiliation with our Caucus will also be considered.)
2. The member being nominated and considered must be a current active member of the Washington Education Association (either Certificated or ESP.)
3. No member of the current WEA: NA.AN.FN Executive Council will be eligible or considered.

Outstanding Native Educator of the Year Award Application

All nominations must be received no later than 11:59pm on April 17, 2026. The final decisions of the WEA: NA.AN.FN Executive Council will be considered final.”

Last year was an amazing start, and we recognized Derek Atkins (Grand Coulee Dam EA) and Geri Flett (Wellpinit EA) as our first two winners during Teacher Appreciation Week last year. This year, it is our sincere hope that we receive an avalanche of applications for our awards. We want to recognize two (2) deserving educators this year...one Certificated, one ESP. If you have a deserving Native Educator in your District, we hope that you will nominate them for the award! If you have 20...nominate all 20!

**SOURCE: Shawn Brehm
WEA NA.AN.FN**

“Nomination Process

1. Every nomination must be accompanied with a completed Nomination form, at least two Letters of Support, and must be received by 11:59 pm Friday, April 17, 2026 to be considered. (Final selections will be made by a vote of the Executive Council on April 27.)
2. Letters of Support are intended to help the committee get to know the work of the candidate, and their impact on their school, colleagues, community, and most importantly, their students.
3. Preference will be given to candidates that also include a Letter (or Letters) of Support from the students that they serve. Student voice will be prioritized in this process. The student(s) can be either a current or former student who interacted with the candidate (please, no testimony from any student who may be a child, or younger sibling of the candidate.)
4. Self-nomination is allowed, but no Letters of Support may be submitted by the Candidate themselves.
5. All nominations may either be sent electronically to shawn.brehm@washingtonea.org (with the completed nomination form, and Letters of Support attached,) or via US Mail to:

WEA: NA.AN.FN
c/o Shawn Brehm
PO Box 371
Wellpinit, WA 99040”

**SOURCE: Shawn Brehm
WEA NA.AN.FN**

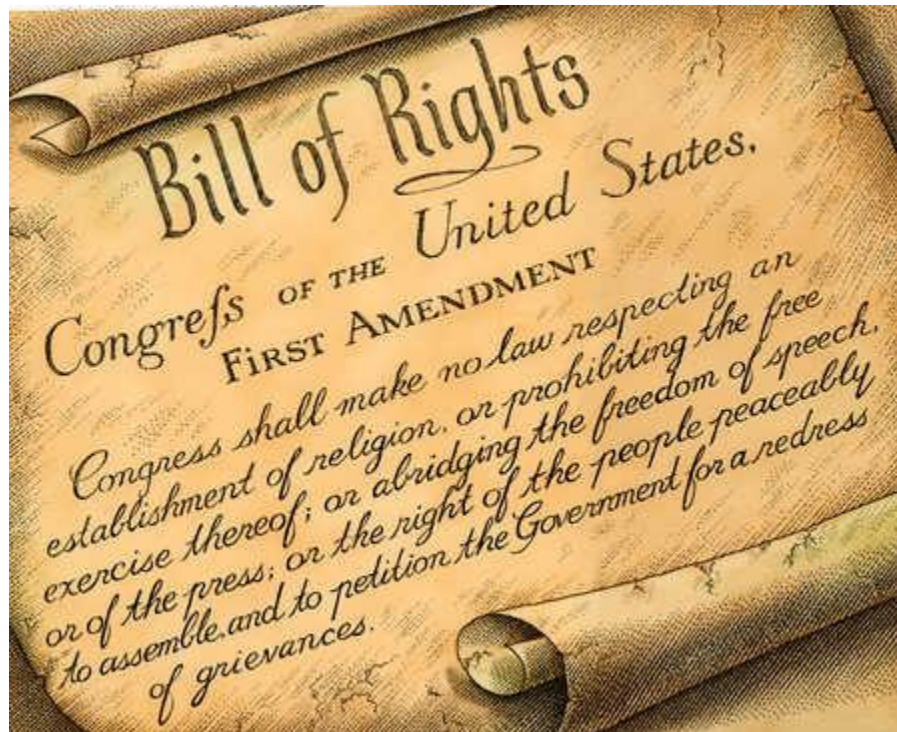
Collective Bargaining Update Contract Negotiation



The Association Bargaining Team members met on February 18 to develop the bargaining survey as a measure of member perspectives regarding the bargaining priorities for the Association. The team met again on March 26 to review the bargaining survey results and discuss the next steps for developing the initial collective bargaining contract proposal. The bargaining survey data will be shared at the Representative Council meeting on April 29.

The team will meet again on May 4 to review and finalize the initial contract proposal before presenting to the District. The scheduled bargaining dates with the District are May 12, 15, 20, and 26.

In addition to meeting with the District for collective bargaining, TEA will also meet with PSE, TAP, and TOPA on April 13 to develop a coordinated bargaining strategy this year. The bargaining units will negotiate their own contracts but will partner to develop strategy.



NEA Course Offering: Free Speech Rights

Resource for Members

“Recent online campaigns have targeted educators for comments made on social media, including efforts to identify individuals, share their personal information online, and pressure institutions to investigate or discipline them. In some cases, educators have faced removal from the classroom, formal investigations, or other employment consequences.

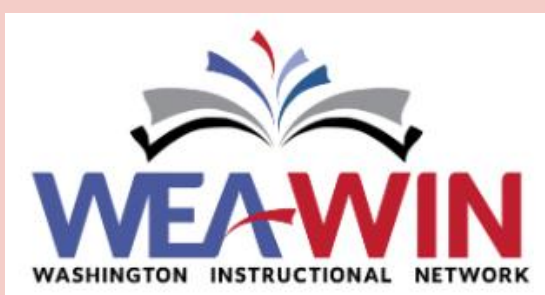
In response, the NEA Office of General Counsel (OGC) has developed a **30-minute online course for NEA members** focused on the First Amendment’s speech protections for educators and best practices for securing social media accounts. Through real-world case studies, interactive quizzes, and practical guidance, participants will gain a clearer understanding of how to engage in protected off-duty speech while reducing exposure to online risks such as doxing.

For NEA members wishing to take the course, please follow these instructions:

1. Create an account ([Sign Up in NEA PEP](#)) or log in ([Log Into Your NEA PEP Account](#)).
2. Go to the course in the Professional Excellence Portal catalog. Once you are logged in, you may [navigate directly to the course](#).

For questions about the course content, please contact the Office of the General Counsel at AskOGC@nea.org. For technical questions or assistance logging in, please contact NEA Learning Solutions at LearningSolutions@nea.org.”

SOURCE: NEA Today



Use your Washington Instructional Network login to access the WEA RA 101 Course for members.



WEA RA 101 Course

Interested in attending RA next year?

Please visit the following WEA website to learn more about how the RA functions:

[Welcome to WEA RA 101!](#)

“RA 101 is an introductory course designed to provide a basic overview of the rules, procedures and policies of WEA RA. It is a perfect starting point whether you are new to RA or an experienced delegate who wants a refresher. The course is online, self-paced and free. You can dive in any time and start learning!

In this course, you will learn more about the democratic processes of WEA and details about RA. This course will cover the following modules:

- [Introduction and General Information](#)
- [Democracy Positions: Governance and Committees/Work Teams](#)
- [Foundational Information: Important Documents](#)
- [Submitting Proposals: Business Submission Process](#)
- [Meeting Rules: Parliamentary Procedure](#)
- [What Else to Expect: The RA Experience](#)
- [What's Next? Conclusion](#)

At the end of this course, our hope is that you feel empowered to fully participate in RA!”

SOURCE: WEA



Women’s History Month

March Observance

“WEA’s history is shaped by generations of women whose leadership, courage and commitment have strengthened our schools, our students and our union. When WEA formed in 1889, the association represented everyone employed in public schools, administrators included. While the teaching force was mostly women, men held the majority of management positions. Even though WEA had its early education leader pioneers such as Josephine Corliss Preston and Eva Greenslit Anderson, only recently has the era of women in leadership began, built through over 30-plus years of WEA member activism and action.

While women formed (and continue to form) a majority of members in our union, power and leadership were frequently dominated by men and viewed through a lens of patriarchal strength. From the 1920s to the 1970s it was thought that only men could lead hard bargaining against the men in administration. During this time women dealt with losing their profession because of marriage and pregnancy, as well as absurd dress codes and other forms of disparaging sexist treatment. Many of our active and retired members remember not only the women’s liberation movement, but also the indignity of not being able to have a bank account or loan without the permission of a husband or father before 1975, despite the enactment of Title IX.

Policy change doesn’t mean change in practice overnight. WEA has always been an early leader in opportunities, training and support. We empower women in leadership and uplift rank and file members to have a voice and agency in the outcomes of students and members. With 72% of our active members being women, nearly 20% being women of color, we have a strong foundation that continues to lead our state and the nation in powerful union work.

This month-long observance originated in grassroots-advocacy and became a national designation to uplift women whose contributions have too often gone unseen. It is both a celebration and a call to continue our work toward equity, dignity and justice.”

SOURCE: Randy Paddock
WEA Equity and Diversity Coordinator

